

News Release

PRESS OFFICE

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SBA Announces New Patriot Express Loan Initiative

Program Focuses on Military Community Including Veterans, Service-disabled, Active-duty in transition, Reserve and Guard, Spouses and Related Groups

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The SBA has announced the new Patriot Express Pilot Loan as the latest extension to the financial, procurement, and technical assistance programs the agency provides to the military community. Patriot Express is a streamlined loan product based on SBA's highly successful SBA Express Program, but with enhanced guarantee and interest rate characteristics.

"With military activations and extensions having a profound impact on entrepreneurs in the military community, SBA is committed to helping America's service men and women during the continuing War on Terror," SBA Administrator Steven Preston said. "We believe that Patriot Express, supported by SBA's other services, goes directly to the needs of these American Patriots who wish to start businesses, and in the process encourages job creation and growth, an essential part of the President's economic agenda."

"SBA thanks the Presidential Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes for its guidance and hard work and Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson for his devoted leadership," Preston added.

Patriot Express is available to military community members including veterans, service-disabled veterans, active-duty service members participating in the military's Transition Assistance Program, Reservists and National Guard members, current spouses of any of the above, and the widowed spouse of a service member or veteran who died during service, or of a service-connected disability.

The new Patriot Express Loan is offered by SBA's network of participating lenders nationwide and features SBA's fastest turnaround time for loan approvals. Loans are available up to \$500,000 and qualify for SBA's maximum guaranty of up to 85 percent for loans of \$150,000 or less and up to 75 percent for loans over \$150,000 up to \$500,000. For loans above \$350,000, lenders are required to take all available collateral.

"Patriot Express takes the best from SBA's most popular loan program and made it better by providing access to capital to our Nation's military entrepreneurs who have served or are serving our country," SBA's Wisconsin District Director Eric Ness said.

"The new Patriot Express Loan is a huge marching step in the right direction to help those in the military community and a salute to all those who have or are serving our country," said Wisconsin's SBA Business Development Specialist and Disabled Combat Veteran Joe Rosner, who served our country on a gunboat in River Assault Squadron 15 on the inland waterways of Viet Nam.

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The Patriot Express Loan can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases. Patriot Express Loans feature SBA's lowest interest rates for business loans, generally 2.25 percent to 4.75 percent over prime depending upon the size and maturity of the loan. Local SBA district offices will have a listing of Patriot Express lenders in their areas. Details on the initiative can be found at www.sba.gov/patriotexpress/index.html.

Recently, the SBA has expanded its face to the military community through an expansion of its Veterans Affairs Office, increased local outreach and goaling in its district offices and participation in Department of Labor job seminars.

SBA provides programs and services for veterans and members of the military community wanting to establish or expand small businesses.

SBA has veterans' business development officers in district offices in every state and territory able to provide military community members full access to the SBA's range of programs and services. There are also five Veterans Business Outreach Centers located in: Albany, N.Y; Pittsburgh, PA; Lynn Haven, Fla.; Edinburg, Texas; and Sacramento, Calif.

In addition to district offices, SBA's resource partners SCORE, Counselors to America's Small Business; Small Business Development Centers; and Women's Business Centers provide local and online assistance with: writing a business plan, financing options to start or grow your business, managing the business, expanding the business and selling goods and services to the government.

For those who are already small business owners and who expect call-up, the SBA and its resource partners have expertise to assist with preparing their businesses before deployment, managing their businesses, selling goods and services to the government, obtaining other SBA financing and financial assistance, and obtaining loans for economic injury – Military Reserve Economic Injury Disaster Loans (MREIDL) – Loans of up to \$1.5 million are available for small businesses sustaining economic injury because an owner or essential employee has been called to active duty as a military reservist.

“More than 14 percent of businesses in America are owned by veterans, and SBA is proud that we guarantee more than \$1 billion annually in loans for veteran-owned businesses,” Administrator Preston said. “Veteran-owned businesses make significant contributions to the economy and because of the unique technical and leadership skills they acquire through military service, they can become successful entrepreneurs. As we celebrate Flag Day we remember our military community and their patriotism on behalf of our grateful nation.”

The SBA and its Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD) provides comprehensive assistance, outreach and support to veterans. Each year the SBA assists more than 100,000 veterans, service-disabled veterans and Reserve Component members.

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Editor please note: A Web-based press kit on the Patriot Express Initiative can be found at . . . http://www.sba.gov/patriotexpress/SBA_PATRIOT_PRESS_KIT.html